



OFFICE OF THE UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

4000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301-4000

OCT 14 2003

PERSONNEL AND
READINESS

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF ARMY
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF NAVY
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF AIR FORCE
(MANPOWER AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)

SUBJECT: Appointment of Chaplains for Military Service

This guidance is provided pending reissuance of Department of Defense Directive 1304.19, "Appointment of Chaplains for Military Service" and is effective immediately. This guidance shall be incorporated in the next revision of the Directive.

An Ecclesiastical Certifying Agent (Certifier) is authorized to provide or withdraw Ecclesiastical Certification on behalf of a Religious Organization. Such Certification is written documentation from a Religious Organization which complies with the administrative requirements of Department policy. The Certification provides assurance to the Department that an applicant for the military chaplaincy is fully and professionally qualified and endorsed to perform all offices, functions, sacraments, ordinances, and ceremonies required of a Religious Ministry Professional (RMP).

Effective immediately, any religious organization which is formed to meet a lay constituency, holds an Internal Revenue Code (IRC) 501(c)(3) tax exempt status, and can present a qualified RMP, may function as a Certifier and may sponsor a RMP as a chaplain. The Military Services shall compare the individual's qualifications to the Service's requirements, and select on a merit basis under procedures established by the Secretary of the Military Department concerned. Appropriate security vetting shall be accomplished.

Should a Certifier become disqualified from performing that role (e.g., through loss of IRC 501(c)(3) tax exempt status), RMPs serving under that certification must affiliate with another Certifier, if qualified. Absent such an affiliation, the affected RMP may be processed for separation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles S. Abell".

Charles S. Abell
Principal Deputy

